

VESTIBULAR ACTIVITIES

TURN DOWN THE LIGHTS



Dimming the light reduces visual input, causing you to direct more attention to input from the other sensory systems. But there are more ways than one to reduce visual input. This activity will give you a few new ideas for manipulating vision for better balance.

Benefits »

- ⦿ Facilitates somatic and vestibular awareness.
- ⦿ Applies to other activities.

Set It Up »

Make sure the exercise space is safe and clutter free and that balance supports are available where appropriate.

How to Do It »

You'll need to plan ways to safely reduce the amount of light in your facility. Dimming the lights, pulling the shades, or having participants wear sunglasses are all effective ways to reduce lighting and vision and engage the vestibular and the somatic system.

- ⦿ Stretching
- ⦿ Seated exercises
- ⦿ Some standing or moving activities, such as Belly Button Training or Side Stepping (intermediate to advanced difficulty)
 - Walking on a treadmill (Intermediate)
 - Standing on a balance pad (Advanced)
 - Traffic School (Intermediate)
 - Words on the Wall in the Hall (Advanced)
 - WalkAbouts (Intermediate)

Give It More Balance »

Balance training using reduced vision directs attention to the other two sensory systems (somatosensory and vestibular). Here are some cues to use that can help participants notice increased somatic awareness.

- ⦿ Anytime that you're standing: Notice the ground beneath you (e.g., carpet, hardwood, inclined, smooth, bumpy, slippery, sticky, grass).
- ⦿ When doing walking activities: Notice the sequence of your foot patterns moving you over the ground. Do you notice how your heel strike rolls to midfoot and off your toe?
- ⦿ During stretches: Can you feel the stretch in your muscle? Where? How much?
- ⦿ When doing strength exercises: Where do you feel the effort? Where do you feel the resistance?
- ⦿ When standing still: Notice where you feel your body weight over your feet.
- ⦿ What other changes come to mind?

Keep It Safe »

Let them choose the activities they feel comfortable doing. Dim lights may cause dizziness, especially in participants with vestibular dysfunction. Always begin with seated activities—standing and moving are intermediate and advanced activities. Looking up or over their shoulders can be a fall risk, so always be careful when reducing vision.

Live It »

More kinesthetic and vestibular training can be added to almost any activity with just the flip of the light switch!